

4 Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera: English Text

4.1 Ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-moreh*: the Text

The English translation below is based on the critical edition of the Hebrew text of the commentary, edited by Yair Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2001). The commentator's prologue is on pages 111–117; the commentary on the Preface to the *Guide* is on pages 121–123. For each paragraph in the English translation, I indicate page and line number in Shiffman's edition. Shiffman's edition appeared as one of the volumes for the now dormant series “Early Commentaries on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*” (edited by Aviezer Ravitzky). The English translation, annotation, and paragraph divisions are my own; information culled from Shiffman's notes is duly attributed. In the Hebrew commentary, Ibn Falaquera translates entire portions of the *Guide* and the differences from Ibn Tibbon's version are indicated in the English translation where possible. I provide page and line numbers from Shiffman's edition at the beginning of each paragraph.

Ibn Falaquera opens the *Moreh ha-moreh* with a brief poem in praise of the *Guide* and of Maimonides. The text is multi-layered, replete with biblical borrowings and linguistic puns that would be difficult if not impossible to reproduce in translation, and I have therefore chosen not to translate it (the original Hebrew can be found in Shiffman's edition of the *Moreh ha-moreh*).

Conventions for English translation:

Normal font:	text of commentary
<i>Italic font</i> :	quotations from <i>Guide</i> within the text
Bold font :	biblical prooftexts
Bold italic font :	biblical prooftexts also found in the <i>Guide</i>
...	omission by commentator in quotation from <i>Guide</i>

4.2 Ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-moreh*: Reception

The modern study of commentaries on the *Guide* can be considered to have begun with the *Moreh ha-moreh*. It was the first of the medieval commentaries to receive a stand-alone edition without the text of the *Guide*, edited by Mordekhai Bisliches in 1837.¹ That edition did not contain Ibn Falaquera's three appendices that follow the commentary, but it included a short commentary titled *Be'ur nifla'* as an appendix.

¹ Mordekhai Leib Bisliches ed., *Sefer Moreh ha-moreh* (Pressburg: Anton Edlen von Schmid, 1837).

The precise identity of the author of the *Be'ur nifla'* is unknown.² The third appendix was edited separately by F. Delitsch in 1840, who studied it in light of the Arabic text of the *Guide*.³ The 1837 edition was reproduced in the trilogy *Sheloshah qadmonei mefarshei ha-moreh* (*Three Early Commentators on the Guide*, Jerusalem, 1961), with Ibn Falaquera's three appendices, and along with the first editions of the twin commentaries by Ibn Kaspi (1848), and the commentary by Moses of Narbonne (1852). In addition to the editions, scholarly study of the *Moreh ha-moreh* began with S. Munk in the mid-19th century.⁴ More recently, Yair Shiffman has produced a modern critical edition of the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, which is the source for the translation in this chapter.⁵ Shiffman and other scholars have continued to examine different aspects of the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, especially Ibn Falaquera's translation of the lemmata from the *Guide* contained in the commentary.⁶

² On this commentary, see Abraham Nuriel, "Was Shem Tov ibn Falaquera the Author of the *Be'ur nifla'*?" *Qiryat sefer* 62 (1988), 915–916 [Hebrew], and Carlos Fraenkel, *From Maimonides to Samuel ibn Tibbon: the Transformation of the "Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn" into the "Moreh ha-Nevukhim"* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007), 375 [Hebrew].

³ Franz Delitsch, "Shem-Thob Palkeira's Berichtigungen der Übersetzung des Delalet el-Hairin von Samuel ibn Tibbon," pt. 1, *Litteraturblatt des Orients* 12 (1840), 177–180, pt. 2, 15 (1840), 225–227, pt. 3, 17 (1840), 257–259.

⁴ Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Paris: A. Franck, 1859), 274 and passim. Munk also quotes the *Moreh ha-Moreh* at length in his notes to the French translation of the *Guide*, trans. Munk, *Le guide des égarés* (Paris: A. Franck, 1856–1866).

⁵ Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2001. The edition by Shiffman is the text of the *Moreh ha-Moreh* used in this study and as the Hebrew basis for the English translation in Chapter Five.

⁶ Yair Shiffman, "Shem Tov Falaquera's Method of Translation," *Leshonenu* 56:3 (1993), 223–240 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "On Different Methods of Translating the *Guide of the Perplexed* into Hebrew and their Philosophical Implications," *Tarbiš* 65:2 (1996), 263–275 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Shem Tov Falaquera as a Commentator on the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides," in *Encounters in Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Culture*, ed. Joshua Blau (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1998), 193–204 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Shem Tov Falaquera as a Commentator of the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides—Outlines of His Thought," *Maimonidean Studies* 3 (1995), 1–29 [Hebrew section]; Yair Shiffman, "Falaquera on Maimonides and Ibn Rushd," *Pe'amim* 61 (1994), 132–143 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Ibn Bajja as a Source for Rabbi Shem Tov Falaquera's Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed* III:51,54," *Tarbiš* 60:2 (1991), 225–235 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Further Information Regarding the Arabic Sources of the *Guide of the Perplexed*," in *The Intertwined World of Islam: Essays in Memory of Hava Lazarus-Yafeh*, ed. Naḥem Ilan (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, Institute Ben-Švi and Bialik Foundation, 2002), 566–585 [Hebrew]; Steven Harvey, "The Sources of the Quotations from Aristotle's *Ethics* in the *Guide of the Perplexed* and the *Guide to the Guide*," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 14 (1998), 87–102 [Hebrew]; Ḥayim Kreisel, "Between Religion and Science: Three Medieval Hebrew Encyclopaedias," in *Jewish Thought and Jewish Faith*, ed. Daniel Lasker (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2012), 71–87 [Hebrew].

Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera

Moreh ha-moreh (Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*)

[Preface to Commentary]⁷

[Prefatory poem]

Behold God exalteth by his power: **who teacheth [moreh] like him** [Job 36:22]? **Blessed be the name of the Lord** [Job 1:21], **exalted above all blessing and praise** [Neh 9:5], who creates all and revives all, **who keeps truth forever** [Ps 146:6]; who **grants knowledge to man and teaches understanding to humans**.⁸

[1]⁹ After His praises, I say that the first purpose of this book is to speak on some of the subjects that are mentioned in the book *Guide of the Perplexed* and the opinions of the philosophers written therein: to inform of those things on which they agreed, those on which they disagreed, and their ambiguities whose true [meaning] they could not determine.¹⁰ Many of the scholars of our Torah – who have not engaged in any science other than the doctrines of the Torah – see that it is not proper to engage in the words of the philosophers at all,¹¹ since they deny most of the tradition that has been received from the prophets. For the truth is in what we have received from the prophets and from our Sages, who are scholars of the truth. Others from among scholars of the Torah, who have engaged in both Torah and science, see that it is proper to accept from among the notions of the philosophers all that stands rational proofs that do not deny anything found in tradition [*qabbalah*].¹²

⁷ The Hebrew text of the preface and the commentary translated below is in Yair Shiffman's critical edition, *Moreh ha-moreh* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2001), 111–123 [henceforth *Moreh ha-moreh*].

⁸ Cf. the fourth blessing of the *'Amidah* prayer: “You grant knowledge to man, and teach understanding to humans. Grant us wisdom (*hokhmah*), understanding, and knowledge. Blessed are you God, who grants knowledge.” See ibn Falaquera's reference to this blessing in ibn Falaquera's *Epistle of the Debate*: “God, may He be blessed, gives to him whom He loves a discerning mind to investigate by means of these intelligibles the true reality of the beings. Therefore, the Sages, may their memory be blessed, arranged that man ask for them in the beginning of the petition for his needs in prayer.” Steven Harvey trans., *Falaquera's “Epistle of the Debate:” An Introduction to Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 30, n44 (henceforth *Epistle*).

⁹ *Moreh ha-moreh* 112, line 17–27.

¹⁰ The expression “opinions of the philosophers” recalls Falaquera's own *Opinions of the Philosophers* (*De'ot ha-filosofim*).

¹¹ Cf. the “pietist” in the *Epistle of the Debate*: “Since [the philosophers] deny the Law, it is improper to engage in the study of their books or to look into their words at all” (*Epistle*, 18).

¹² Throughout his writings, ibn Falaquera insists upon acceptance of demonstrated philosophical truth, but ostensibly only to the extent that it does not contradict the teachings of Judaism. See also Prologue, ¶4; Rafael Jospe, *Torah and Sophia: the Life and Thought of Shem Tov ibn Falaquera* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press 1988), 83–86; *Epistle*, 18, 41.

[2]¹³ This is correct, for there are individuals who are [called] *elohim* and *sons of the most high* [Ps 82:6].¹⁴ They know the truth by divine assistance, beholding it *face to face* [Num 14:14], and not through human inquiry.¹⁵ Rather, God instructs and *guides them in the way wherein* they walk [Ps 143:8].¹⁶ They are *the saints that are in the earth, and the excellent* [Ps 16:3]; the Lord is *always before* them [Ps 16:8],¹⁷ and they do not turn Him away from their minds. Some rightly say that this is the meaning of *I neither learned wisdom, nor have knowledge of the holy* [Prov 30:3] and of [the prophet] David's request to *lead me in thy truth, and teach me* [Ps 25:5]. In evidence of this wisdom, it is said *for the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding* [Prov 2:6]. It is a divine gift only given to those who exercise human powers of apprehension.¹⁸ This grace is granted and this glory is given—of which it is said *the Lord will give grace and glory* [Ps 84:12] — only to those whom God favors and who love Him [or: whom God loves].¹⁹

[3]²⁰ There are others who are beneath those [individuals]. All of their opinions are derived from human inquiry, with the assistance of the intellect that is given to them by nature. They are scholars of human science, and that which they can apprehend of things comes from their investigation of existents.²¹ Their perfections are according

13 *Moreh ha-moreh* 112, line 28–35.

14 In the *Guide* these two terms describe individuals who consider matter as a deficiency “imposed by necessity” and who dedicate themselves to the “mental representation of the intelligibles, the most certain and noblest of which being the apprehension, in as far as this is possible, of the deity, of the angels, and of His other works. These individuals are those who are permanently with God. They are those to whom it has been said: ‘ye are gods (*elohim*), and all of you children of the Most High’.” Pines III:8 (433).

15 Ibn Falaquera makes here a distinction between a superior form of knowledge, which one attains through divine assistance and characterizes the prophet, and natural knowledge, described in the next paragraph, and which characterizes the philosophers.

16 Maimonides cites this proof-text in the poem that follows the Epistle Dedicatory and precedes the Introduction to the *Guide* (Pines 5).

17 In III:51 Maimonides uses this proof-text as an illustration of “excellent men” who “begrudge the times they are turned away from [God] by other occupations” (Pines 621).

18 In Shiffman's edition a variant reading is given (*hishtadelut 'enoshit*, “human” or “natural effort”).

19 The “divine gift” may be understood in light of a parallel passage in *Epistle*, 30: “God, may He be blessed, gives to him whom He loves [or: who loves Him] a discerning mind to investigate by means of these intelligibles the true reality of the beings [*nimṣa'im*].

20 *Moreh ha-moreh* 112–113, line 35–44.

21 In *Moreh ha-moreh* III:51, ibn Falaquera writes that the allegory at the beginning of III:51, on different classes of people who try to gain entrance to a palace to see a king, corresponds to “people who acquire perfection through their investigation and study of existents. But the ‘saints that are in the earth’ [Ps 16:3; cf. ¶2 above] acquire perfection and truth and do not learn the sciences of the philosophers, for the Creator directs those whom He wishes towards His truth and instructs [them how to] to be among those who are close to him, and divine perfection can be apprehended by means of divine assistance.” (318).

to the perfection of their knowledge of existents.²² They are obligated by necessity to learn the science of philosophers regarding the nature of existents by means of investigation. An educated [*maskil*] individual listens to their words and accepts whatever they speak of the truth. As the Sages have said: “how did R. Meir learn Torah at the mouth of ‘Aḥer? Behold Rabbah b. Bar Ḥana said that R. Joḥanan said: What is the meaning of the verse, **for the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts** [Mal 2:7]? [The meaning is that] if the teacher is like an angel of the Lord of hosts, they should seek the Law at his mouth, but if not, they should not seek the Law at his mouth! – Resh Laqish answered: R. Meir found a verse and expounded it [as follows]: **Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thy heart unto my knowledge** [Prov 22:17]. It does not say, ‘unto their knowledge’, but ‘unto my knowledge’.”²³

[4]²⁴ This method was sought by important and eminent scholars of Torah who were pious of the Most High: to listen to all matters of science that they apprehended by intellectual investigation, and which were not contrary to tradition. It is said further: “R. Meir found a pomegranate; he ate [the fruit] within it, and the peel he threw away.”²⁵ In this manner the [Sages] likened worthy subjects to the core of a pomegranate, which is nourishment for the soul and from which the soul derives enjoyment. Intellectual matters were likened to the nectar of a pomegranate, as it is said: **I would cause thee to drink from spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate** [Song 8:2]. They likened matters that are worthless and that should not be accepted to the peel of a pomegranate, which is fit only to be thrown away. However, it is imperative to warn an individual and make known to him that not everyone is suitable for [learning] matters through investigation. Rather, [they are meant] for those whose nature is pure, who have **sense** and **understand** [cf. Neh 8:8] the written Torah and the words of the Sages – who received its interpretation – and thereafter learned the sciences that are a preparation for the ultimate science.²⁶

[5]²⁷ But it is necessarily obligatory to precede [learning] by good traits from the Torah, as the Sages said: “anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will

²² Cf. ibn Rushd: “For the thing known is the perfection of the knower according to the philosophers,” *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, trans. Simon van den Bergh (Cambridge: The Trustees of the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, 1987), 1:122 [henceforth *Incoherence*].

²³ b. *Ḥagigah* 15b (cf. *Moreh ha-moreh* 113 n40).

²⁴ *Moreh ha-moreh* 113, line 44–54.

²⁵ b. *Ḥagigah* 15b. Ibn Falaquera repeats this metaphor in several other works. It was echoed by Jacob Anatoli, Joseph ibn Kaspi, and even by Abba Mari, the adversary of philosophical study during the controversy over the study of philosophy in 1303–1306. See *Epistle*, 18 n11.

²⁶ That is, metaphysics or divine science, the *telos* of all other learning.

²⁷ *Moreh ha-moreh* 113, line 54–60.

endure.”²⁸ Furthermore, they are indispensable for an individual’s existence – and not merely existence qua human, but for existence as a wise individual [*hakham*]. Therefore, the philosophers said that it is necessary for all to accept the principles of religion, since denying them and disputes around them destroy human existence. Therefore, heretics must be killed, and one must believe that the principles of a true religion are divine notions that are above the human intellect. One must acknowledge them even though their causes are hidden.²⁹

[6]³⁰ Thus you will not find any philosopher who disputed the occurrence of miracles that are well known around the world. For they are the principles that preserve religion, and religion is the principle of good traits.³¹ One of the philosophers said that the principle of belief of the philosophers is the unity of God; that he is Lord above all; to do what the prophets have commanded, for they are his emissaries; to pursue truth and uprightness.³² A pious scholar³³ has said that there is no distinction between God himself and his words, or distinction [between God himself] and his actions.³⁴ Given that [the miracle] was in speech, that scholar would have assented to the reality of miracles. Look at what our Teacher, peace upon him, wrote in chapter fifty of the third part [of the *Guide*] and what I have written on it.³⁵ **Behold, how good and pleasant**

28 Mishnah, *Pirkei 'avot* 3:11.

29 The entire paragraph, excluding the first sentence, is a nearly verbatim quotation from *Incoherence* (315). The rabbinical quotation at the beginning of the paragraph is a good example of what ibn Falaquera describes later on as the convergence between the Rabbis and ibn Rushd (below, Prologue, ¶13).

30 *Moreh ha-moreh* 113–114, line 61–69.

31 Cf. *Incoherence*: “the ancient philosophers did not discuss the problem of miracles, since according to them such things must not be examined and questioned; for they are the principles of the religions... these are the principles of the acts through which man becomes virtuous” (315). Ibn Falaquera transforms the tenor of ibn Rushd’s passage: For ibn Rushd here, philosophers did not discuss miracles at all, while for ibn Falaquera they may have discussed miracles without disputing their validity.

32 Cf. Ibn Miskawayh, *Al-fauz al-asghar* (*The Shorter Work on Salvation*), ch.1, part 2, in which he writes that the ancient philosophers agree that a Maker exists; they also share with the prophets the belief in divine unity and justice. Khwaja Abdul Hamid, *Ibn Maskawaih* [sic]: *A Study of His “Al-Fauz Al-Asghar”* (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1946), 13–14. For parallels between ibn Miskawayh and ibn Falaquera, see Steven Harvey, “A New Islamic Source of the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” *Maimonidean Studies* 2 (1991), 47–55.

33 *hakham hasid*. In the *Epistle of the Debate* it refers to scholar who is both Jewish and philosophically educated.

34 In other words, divine speech and action do not call into question the notion of divine unity (literally: “there is no contradiction between God Himself and His words”).

35 Ibn Falaquera’s commentary on the *Guide* does not cover III:50. However, he connects the notion of miracles to that of divine providence in “Chapter Two” of his appendix to *Moreh ha-moreh*, writing that divine providence preserves individuals “by way of miracle and sign” (*‘al derekh ha-nes ve-ha-‘ot*). *Moreh ha-moreh*, 114 n67.

[Ps 133:1] is the statement that concludes the book of Ecclesiastes: **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man**”[Eccl 12:13]. Therefore **he that keepeth the law, happy is he** [Prov 29:18].

[7]³⁶ I say further: since it is not proper to reveal deep scientific matters to every individual, the discourse of ancient scholars takes the form of abbreviation, allusion and allegory.³⁷ Just as it is not proper to reveal those matters to every individual, it is not proper to commingle them with notions from the Torah, which are meant to be taught to all people. Rather, the correct way is to write each in its own place, since for every thing to be in its own place [it is said] **behold, how good** [Ps 133:1]. Most errors and doubts come from statements by those who commingle the two, for they wish to instruct the multitude in deep subjects that cannot be borne by the minds of most intellectuals, let alone by those of the multitude. Their intention is to instruct the multitude that there is no contradiction between Torah and science. Due to the confusion that ensues from writing on such matters in inappropriate places, our Teacher [Maimonides] apologizes and says that he is apprehensive about writing on those matters, while pointing to the necessity that obligated him to set them into writing.³⁸ For he found himself genuinely obligated to write them down, and compelled to do so by something, namely, the intellectual faculty. When [that faculty] is strong in a scholar, it compels him to expose to another that which he knows of the truth, as [Maimonides] writes on it in chapter thirty-nine of the second part [of the *Guide*].³⁹ The Word of God⁴⁰ inevitably compels whoever has apprehended a certain perfection to reflect it upon another.⁴¹ That being the case, an individual who has acquired knowledge of something of these secrets, either from his study [alone] or from someone [else] who has righted his path, cannot but express [it]. However, it is impossible to explain it, and that individual must allegorize [it].

³⁶ *Moreh ha-moreh* 114, line 70–83.

³⁷ See *Guide*, Preface; I:17 (Pines, 42–43), and Zerahiah Hen, Commentary, Long Version, ¶7.

³⁸ Pines 16.

³⁹ Rather II:37, Pines 373–375.

⁴⁰ *davar ha-'elohi*. Ibn Falaquera seems to use the term to mean something like *logos*; cf. also below, Prologue, ¶14. In *Fons Vitae* V.56, ibn Gabirol identifies the divine word with the divine will, and compares Creation to divine utterance. It is certain that ibn Falaquera was acquainted with ibn Gabirol's view, since it appears in his Hebrew translation of excerpts of the *Fons Vitae*. See Munk, *Mélanges*, 121 n2, 131. On the identification of divine utterance with will, see also I:65 (Pines 158–160). It is also possible that ibn Falaquera's source for this concept is Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*, where *davar ha-'elohi* ('amr ilāhi) is often translated as divine “power,” “influence,” or “order.” See Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 7–9, 29–30. My thanks to one of the anonymous reviewers for suggesting this connection.

⁴¹ The verb for “reflect” (*yashpi'a*) shares the same linguistic root as the prophetic overflow (*shefa'*). Cf. II:11, Pines 275–276; PMZ, s.v. “shefa',” 89.

[8]⁴² I say further that the subjects of the [Guide] are beneficial for those who have engaged in Torah and science and who are perplexed; it will rescue them from their perplexity. In similar fashion, [the Guide] may harm those who have not engaged in the sciences and who are not perplexed, to the extent that they may fall into perplexity and not be rescued from it. As it is said: **a people that doth not understand shall fall** [Hos 4:14]. In my view, this is parallel to medicinal drugs: they benefit the sick but harm the healthy.⁴³ Those who are not perplexed have no need of a teacher who can guide them through perplexity, since they do not have any. For perplexity and doubt come about when two given opinions contradict each other and are equivalent in the mind. The individual does not know on which of the two his opinion should lean, and he stands in need of a criterion of preponderance [between the two].⁴⁴ Therefore someone who is not in doubt does not need to have doubts removed because that individual has no doubts.

[9]⁴⁵ Speaking of these matters to everyone is similar to one who feeds the same feed to all animals. The same feed might turn out to be a deadly drug to one and nourishment to another.⁴⁶ The same is true when speaking on opinions [*de'ot*]. An opinion may harm an individual while benefitting another. Those who hold all ideas to be appropriate to all people are like those who hold that all species of feed constitute nourishment to all animals [indiscriminately].⁴⁷

[10]⁴⁸ I say further that one should not be astonished if some error should ensue from reading this book if the reader is not suitable for it. The same occurs to those who read books in the sciences and are not suitable for them. Likewise, one should not be astonished if someone who does not understand its words and gathers from them the opposite of the book's intention, and explains them with interpretations that are not correct. For this has happened to the words of the living God, as the Sages have pointed to the biblical passages where the heretics find support for heresy.⁴⁹ The same

42 *Moreh ha-moreh* 114, line 84–91.

43 See Maimonides' introduction to the commentary on *Pirquei 'avot*, in *Ethical Writings of Maimonides*, eds Raymond L. Weiss and Charles Butterworth (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 70.

44 The term for "criterion of preponderance" (*makhria'*) is related to Maimonides' use of *hakhra'ah* or "giving of preponderance," which in Maimonides' view applies "with respect to a particular existent that is equally receptive of two contraries or of two different things," I:74, Pines 221–220, 'Even-Shemu'el 191–192.

45 *Moreh ha-moreh* 114–115, line 91–95.

46 Cf. ibn Rushd, *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' 'Exposition of Religious Arguments'*, trans. Ibrahim Y. Najjar (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 66.

47 Cf. I:33, where Maimonides argues that exposing deep truths openly and non-esoterically is analogous to "feeding a suckling with wheat bread and meat and giving him wine to drink" (Pines 71).

48 *Moreh ha-moreh* 115, line 96–102.

49 Cf. b. *Megillah* 25b, b. *Sanhedrin* 38b.

occurs with respect to God's deeds, who made them in wisdom and righteousness: the just approach them in righteousness, and they benefit him; the wicked approach them in wickedness, and they harm him. The prophet [Hosea] has said that **for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein** [Hos 14:10]. Solomon said **the way of the Lord is a stronghold for the blameless, but a ruin for evildoers** [Prov 10:29].

[11]⁵⁰ Therefore I say that there is a necessary duty to restrain oneself from reading this book [i.e. the *Guide*] if one has only engaged in the study of Torah, and not to teach it someone who is not suitable even if that individual has engaged in the study of science.⁵¹ All the more so with respect to simpletons who have learned neither Torah nor science, as is the case with many simpletons in our times who learned neither Torah nor science but read this book. As it is clear from the words of our Teacher, those who are suitable for reading it must have fulfilled three conditions.⁵² The first is to have reached the age of forty, as the Sages said: "forty is for wisdom"⁵³ since by then flame of youth has been extinguished,⁵⁴ and most of the subjects in this book involve wisdom.⁵⁵ The second is to have engaged in the Torah and preserved it in the heart, and not deviate from it by means of someone's objections. The third is to have engaged in science for a long period of time.⁵⁶ Whoever lacks any of these conditions and reads many of the chapters in this book is like someone who has come into deep waters, but does not know how to swim and drowns.⁵⁷ Since one of the purposes of this book that I have composed is to warn against that, I have called it *Moreh ha-moreh*. The meaning of the first *moreh* derives from [the verse] **and the Lord shewed him a tree** [Exod

⁵⁰ *Moreh ha-moreh* 115, line 103–116.

⁵¹ Cf. Introduction to the *Guide*: "it is not the purpose of this Treatise to make its totality understandable to the vulgar... nor to teach those who have not engaged in any study other than the science of the Law—I mean the legalistic study (*talmud*) of the Law" (Pines 5).

⁵² Joseph ibn Kaspi, who seems to have read ibn Falaquera's commentary, also schematizes prerequisites for reading the *Guide*; see 'Ammudei kesef, Commentary, ¶3–¶4. However, ibn Kaspi's list differs in content, and it was borrowed by both Profiat Duran and Shem Tov ben Joseph ben Shem Tov. See *The Guide of the Perplexed of Maimonides in the Translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon with Four Commentaries* (Warsaw: Y Goldman, 1872, reprinted Jerusalem 1960), 4a-b [Hebrew].

⁵³ Mishnah, *Pirkei 'avot* 5:21

⁵⁴ Cf. III:51, Pines 627.

⁵⁵ However, in *Reshit hokhmah* ibn Falaquera states that one should seek wisdom (*hokhmah*) beginning at twenty. Moritz David ed, *Shemtob ben Josef ibn Falaquera's Propaedeutik der Wissenschaften* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1902), 16–17 [Hebrew].

⁵⁶ In I:34 Maimonides writes on the "length of the preliminaries" to study of metaphysics; see Pines 73–76.

⁵⁷ For the analogy of knowledge to water and the danger of drowning, see I:34 (Pines 73) and below, Prologue, ¶16.

15:25], and the meaning of the second *moreh* derives from [the verse] **for I have rebelled against His commandment** [Lam 1:18].⁵⁸

[12]⁵⁹ And I, Shem Tov bar Joseph ben Falaquera, the author of this book, present my apologies and say that had it not been for what our Teacher wrote of these matters, along with other sages of the Torah, I would not have permitted myself to do so, on two counts.⁶⁰ The first is the insufficiency of my knowledge; the second is the warning and obligation **be not rash with one's mouth** [cf. Eccl 5:1]⁶¹ and not to bring forth anything of these subjects; and all the more so to write them down in a book. For there is great danger, in relation to the majority of the people who are not suitable for [those subjects], to discuss them even through hints [*remez*].⁶² All that I have written on this book concerns subjects that can be apprehended through scientific investigation. I will not write on anything else, save in limited measure and as necessary for my purpose, since I have written on it all in my commentary on the Torah and on other sacred texts.⁶³ It is fitting to write on each subject in its proper place, and to establish a separation between the holy, which are the books of the prophets and of our Sages, and the profane, which are texts by philosophers.⁶⁴

[13]⁶⁵ I have written about the texts of philosophers who speak on these matters, and on ibn Rushd's opinion, because it appears from his words that he tends towards the opinion of our Sages. Ibn Rushd said: "nobody doubts that among the Israelites there

58 In Exod 15:25, "showed" is *yorehu*, which shares a linguistic root with the name of the *Guide* (*Moreh nevukhim*). The verbal root in medieval philosophical Hebrew was used in the sense of "teach, instruct," or "indicate." In Lam 1:18, "rebelled against" is *maryti*, from which ibn Falaquera derives the second *moreh* in the title. However, a reader who merely glances at the title would intuitively read it as "A Guide to the *Guide*" [of the Perplexed]. It may be that despite ibn Falaquera's explanation, he wished the title of the commentary to carry this double meaning.

59 *Moreh ha-moreh* 115–116, line 117–126.

60 The "apology" (*hitnaṣelut*) is a common fixture of the classical preface (philosophical and otherwise). Here ibn Falaquera may be referring to Maimonides' prohibition on writing commentary and explaining the *Guide* to others. See Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 51–54.

61 In III:52 Maimonides mentions this proof-text as an admonition against speaking too much (Pines 629 n7).

62 In Prologue, ¶7 above ibn Falaquera expressed the idea that *mashal* must be employed when teaching someone with the appropriate intellect and background, but here he seemingly dismisses the value of *mashal* as a pedagogical technique with respect to the multitude.

63 Only fragments of ibn Falaquera's *Commentary on the Torah* have survived, all in citations within later works. In addition to a commentary on the Torah, he also wrote what seems to be a commentary on the Aggadah (*Sefer ha-derash*). See Rafael Jospe and Dov Schwarz, "Shem Tov ibn Falaquera's Lost Bible Commentary," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 64 (1993), 167–200.

64 This sentence recalls the blessing of the ritual of *havdalah*, which blesses God for "establishing a separation between the holy and the profane."

65 *Moreh ha-moreh* 116, line 126–137.

were many learned men, and this is apparent from the books which are found among the Israelites, and which are attributed to Solomon. And never has wisdom ceased among the inspired, i.e. the prophets, and it is therefore the truest of all sayings that every prophet is a sage, but not every sage is a prophet.”⁶⁶ According to ibn Rushd, Plato said: “one of the Jews who engages in metaphysics came to me, and as soon as he began to speak [I realized] I had never seen anything greater. As we entered into divine science and the subject of union with the Active Intellect, I saw something that summoned me; my ultimate goal was to understand some of what he spoke, and I knew that this was above the level of humans.”⁶⁷ It is clear that our Sages and all the more so the prophets, who grasp the secret of God, apprehended from among the divine secrets how God brought into existence created things and how he governs of the universe, which no scholar can apprehend through investigation.⁶⁸

[14]⁶⁹ For our Sages received the truth from the [biblical] patriarchs, peace upon them, who saw it **face to face** [Num 14:14], and from Moses, who was “father in Torah, a father in science, a father in prophecy.”⁷⁰ Thus generation after generation received the truth from the prophets, who were the precious [*segullat benei ’adam*] and chosen ones from among all humankind.⁷¹ The skilled philosophers who believe they have apprehended the truth – if they saw our Sages, and all the more so our prophets, and merited to speak with them on these matters – they would hear such things that would astonish them, as it occurred to that scholar [i.e. Plato]. Their objective would be to understand the words of our Sages, but would then say that the Sages **have inherited lies, vanity** in

66 *Incoherence*, 360–361, and *Moreh ha-moreh* 116, n128–130. Ibn Falaquera omits the end of the sentence as it appears in the *Incoherence*: “the learned, however, are those of whom it is said that they are the heirs of the prophets.” On the notion of “heirs of prophets” (*benei ha-nevi'im*), see Hannah Kasher, “Disciples of the Philosophers as ‘Sons of Prophets’ (Prophecy Manuals Among Maimonides’ Followers),” in *From Rome to Jerusalem: Yosef Baruch Sermoneta Memorial Volume*, ed. Aviezer Ravitzky (Jerusalem: Department of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University, 1998), 73–85 [Hebrew].

67 The second quotation attributed to ibn Rushd does not seem to occur in his writings. Mauro Zonta has pointed out that the *Moreh ha-moreh* quotes texts by ibn Rushd that appear not to have survived in the original Arabic; see his “A Note About Two Newly-Discovered Hebrew Quotations of Averroes’ Works Lost in their Original Arabic Texts,” in *Studies in Hebrew Language and Jewish Culture*, ed. Martin F.J. Baasten and Reinier Munk (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 243.

68 By “grasp the secret of God” (*sod ha-’eloha*) ibn Falaquera may have in mind knowledge of metaphysics that is not meant for a general audience; see also Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶2. The passage implies that ibn Falaquera counts Creation and divine governance among the “secrets” of the Torah. Cf. *Epistle* 116–117.

69 Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 116–117, line 138–153.

70 b. *Megillah* 13a.

71 Cf. Bahya ibn Paquda’s *Duties of the Heart*: “In every generation we see the precious of mankind [*ha-segullah mi-vene’i ’adam*] who walked in the light of wisdom and who turned away from the darkness of lust” (Venice, 1548), 4a. The phrase is of biblical origin and more commonly spoken of Israel vis-à-vis other nations; cf. *Kuzari* 1.27.

their words, **and things wherein there is no profit** [Jer 16:19]. The [philosophers] were astonished to see a small change in the course of nature, as they were astonished to see a horn sprouting from the leg of a sheep, and declared it a wonder of nature.⁷² All the more so had they had seen or recognized the truth of the miracles done for the prophets, their visions of prophecy, and the visions of Daniel and his peers which astonished Nebuchadnezzar, who was a great scholar in every science, along with other scholars of his time.⁷³ As the Greeks remarked, science was common among them.⁷⁴ The [philosophers] would be shocked and not believe many things in which they would otherwise believe if proven scientifically. It seems to me that Plato's opinion that the world is created [*meḥudash*] but is eternal *a parte post* was adopted from our Sages, and not discovered scientifically.⁷⁵ There are some notions in his discourse that tend to agree with theirs, such as that prior to the Word of the Lord, there was a chaotic [*mebulbelet*] motion, and His Word became Creation; in Arabic, this is called "ibdā'".⁷⁶

[15] That chaotic motion within which Creation occurred consisted in a combination of the creation of the Intellect, creation of Soul, and creation of Nature.⁷⁷ Because

72 In *Epistle 47*, ibn Falaquera claims that [the philosophers] "disagree [with us] about miracles in that they believe that is impossible that nature change, but it is not fitting to blame them for this since they did not receive this tradition as we did." See also above, ¶6 ("you will not find any philosopher who disputed the occurrence of miracles").

73 This relatively positive view of Nebuchadnezzar is unusual in Jewish texts. Greek sources tend to describe him with admiration in light of his architectonic achievements, but Hebrew sources condemn him for having carried the ancient Israelites into exile. See Ronald Sack, *Nebuchadnezzar: the Emergence of a Legend* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), 97–108.

74 That is, among the Chaldeans. In Arabic philosophical sources we find several versions of the notion that the ancient Chaldeans had knowledge of science. See *Incoherence* 299; *The Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect by Ibn Rushd with the Commentary of Moses of Narbonne*, trans. Kalman P. Bland (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982), 105, n11 (English section), 141 (Hebrew section); *Alfarabi: Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi, rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969, reprinted 2001), 43.

75 Maimonides describes Plato's position on creation in II:13, Pines 282–284. "Created" means the universe is not eternal *a parte ante* (in contrast to Aristotle). Ibn Falaquera does not elaborate here on whether Plato believed in creation *ex nihilo* or from some pre-existent matter.

76 The notion of creation out of chaotic motion goes back to *Timaeus* 30a–b, 52d. On *mevulbelet* as "chaotic motion" see Jospe and Schwartz, "Lost Bible Commentary," 172–173. In a fragment of his commentary on the Torah he writes that prior to creation, motion was "continuous and chaotic (*tamidit 'einah mesuderet*), which God turned into orderly motion, and lastly he brought forth Soul along with the heavens;" in Jospe and Schwartz, "Lost Bible Commentary," 186. Ibn Falaquera defines *ibdā'* as creation *ex nihilo* (*yesh me-'ayin*) in *Moreh ha-moreh* on III:15, *Moreh ha-moreh* 306, line 51–55, where he labels it the "religious" view.

77 The hierarchy of hypostases of Creation as One, Intellect, Soul and Nature can be found in Plotinus' *Enneads*. The long recension of the *Theology of Aristotle* interpolates the *Logos* or Word between the One and the Intellect. See the several pertinent entries in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The "Theology" and Other Texts*, ed. Jill Kraye, W.F. Ryan, and C. B. Schmitt (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986). Ibn Falaquera translated the long recension of the *Theology* into Hebrew. Extracts of

the motion was not according to any particular order [*seder*] and it was not one single action [*pe'ulah*], he called it chaotic.⁷⁸ The Sages said something similar: all the species were intermingled, and when God said **yielding fruit after his kind** [Gen 1:11], each [species] immediately came into its own.⁷⁹ Thus some of Plato's doctrines tend towards agreement with doctrines of the scholars of Torah, as I describe them in chapter twenty-six of the second part [of the *Guide*].⁸⁰

[16]⁸¹ To indicate the scholar I have mentioned [ibn Rushd], I will call him the "the aforementioned scholar."⁸² There is no doubt he relied upon the words of our Teacher.⁸³ Perhaps what he saw of [Maimonides'] discussion of the Mutakallimūn stimulated him to write about their opinions; he drew up wisdom and found the pearl.⁸⁴ I thought it opportune to compose [this commentary] in Hebrew so that its

the translation in his *Sefer ha-ma'alot* were identified by Paul Fenton, "Shem Tov ibn Falaquera and the *Theology* of Aristotle," *Da'at* 29 (1992), 27–39 [Hebrew]. More recently still a fragment of the direct translation was identified by Tzvi Langermann, "A Hebrew Passage from the *Theology* of Aristotle and Its Significance," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999), 247–259.

78 Elsewhere in *Moreh ha-moreh* (on II:13) Ibn Falaquera writes that Plato "says that the world was came into being as it changed from lack of order [*seder*] into order. For it is possible to understand the meaning of verses [in Genesis] as in the beginning everything was chaotic [*mevulbal*] and lacking in order, and afterwards things became separated from one another and returned to order... it seems to me that since Plato's opinion that the world is created and is eternal *a parte post*, it is said that the opinion of our Torah and his are the same." *Moreh ha-moreh* 259, line 64–65, 70–71; see also *Epistle* 117–119.

79 Cf. b. *Hullin* 60a, *Moreh ha-moreh* on II:13 (259, line 67–68): "The Sages said in Midrash that because the created things were separated from each other and did not come forth intermingled, [God] said 'after his kind'." Maimonides writes of a similar view in II:30, Pines 350.

80 In *Moreh ha-moreh* on II:26 (286–288) ibn Falaquera cites several concurring opinions (by Plato, Solomon ibn Gabirol, rabbinical sages, and a second-hand report by Aristotle) to the effect that all existents with the exception of God are fashioned from the same matter.

81 *Moreh ha-moreh* 117, line 158–169.

82 Throughout the commentary, ibn Falaquera indicates quotations from Ibn Rushd by attributing them to the "aforementioned scholar" (*he-ḥakham ha-nizkar*).

83 See Yair Shiffman, "Falaquera on Maimonides and Ibn Rushd," *Pe'amim* 61 (1995), 132–143 [Hebrew]. See also Alfred Ivry, "Maimonides' Relationship to Ibn Rushd's Thought," *Sefunot* n.s. 8 (2003), 61–74 [Hebrew].

84 In the *Guide* Maimonides quotes a midrash that compares the words of Torah to a well of water. In another instance, Maimonides compares the hidden meaning of Scripture and of rabbinic literature to a pearl that was lost and has been found with the aid of a cheap candle (=the explicit meaning). Here ibn Falaquera combines those two allegories by describing Ibn Rushd as having searched the "waters" of the *Guide* and found the "pearl," something of great value, that is, Maimonides' discussion of the Mutakallimūn. See Pines, 11, 64, Pines 194–231. On ibn Rushd's critique of the Mutakallimūn, see Harry A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 424–425, 428–429, 552–558; *Incoherence*, 61–62, 318–319, 324–325, 332–333 (=theologians).

benefit may be broader.⁸⁵ My purpose in writing it has been described above, and also so that it can serve as a reminder in old age.⁸⁶ In order to arrange [subjects] according to all general [aspects] of his thought, I compiled excerpts from certain chapters [only].⁸⁷ It is also possible that I will write [on] most or the whole of a given chapter, to the extent that I consider it beneficial according to my purposes. At the conclusion of this book I wrote a chapter [as an appendix], regarding terms whose translation is not correct.⁸⁸ That chapter has likewise some benefit for those who read the *Guide* in Arabic, since the meaning of many of the terms in the book are explained there.⁸⁹

85 Shiffman suggests that Ibn Falaquera's decision to write in Hebrew is due to changing historical circumstances: in 13th-century Christian Europe (except Spain), Jewish philosophers tended to live in communities where knowledge of Arabic was rare or inexistent, while until the end of the 12th century, those who studied philosophy tended to live in Muslim lands (Muslim Spain) and could read Arabic in addition to Hebrew (*Moreh ha-moreh*, 16). Nonetheless, knowledge of Arabic continued to be cultivated among Jewish intellectuals in Western Europe throughout the 13th and as late as the 15th century, not only for purposes of philosophical study and translation, but also in the study of medicine and science in general. A commentary on the *Guide* in Arabic could have found readers, though mostly among the elite, while a commentary in Hebrew could also be read by those who learned philosophy exclusively in Hebrew translation. As ibn Falaquera's ensuing remarks show, he had Arabic readers in mind as well as Hebrew readers.

86 Ibn Falaquera also intended his *Book of the Soul* and *Opinions of the Philosophers* to be a reminder (*sefer zikharon*) for old age. In a letter to Joseph ben Judah, to whom the *Guide* was addressed, Maimonides designates one of the purposes of the *Mishneh Torah* as an instrument for use in old age. See Jospe, *Torah and Sophia*, 275 line 6; Twersky, *Code of Maimonides*, 42, and the relevant passage from *Opinions of the Philosophers* in Roberto Gatti, *Ermeneutica e filosofia: introduzione al pensiero ebraico medioevale (secoli XII-XIV)*, (Genoa: Il Melangolo, 2003), 165.

87 There seems to be no clear criterion for ibn Falaquera's selection of chapters. As Yair Shiffman observes, Munk's view that ibn Falaquera comments only on the philosophical chapters of the *Guide* ought to be revisited, since there are many such "philosophical" chapters in the *Guide* on which he is silent. In light of Ibn Falaquera's objectives in the prologue, one possible line of inquiry is that ibn Falaquera might only comment on chapters for which he can find parallels in Ibn Rushd's writings. Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 1n6; Munk, *Mélanges* 495.

88 Ibn Falaquera wrote three appended chapters to the *Moreh ha-moreh*. The first discusses the nature of the acquired intellect and its relation to true felicity, quoting several sources, among which are Solomon ibn Gabirol, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Rushd, and Maimonides (*Moreh ha-moreh* 329–337). The second chapter is on divine providence (*Moreh ha-moreh* 337–341). The third chapter critiques Samuel ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of the *Guide*. In the latter, Ibn Falaquera quotes the Judeo-Arabic word or sentence and gives his own translation, following with a discussion of ibn Tibbon's text that points out mistranslations and added or missing words (*Moreh ha-moreh* 341–365).

89 This is a potential indication that there were readers of the Judeo-Arabic *Guide* in Christian Spain towards the end of the 13th century. We know of readers of Arabic in the 13th century through the existence of Arabic-Hebrew glossaries and Arabic glosses in Hebrew works written in Europe. See Mauro Zonta, "Arabic and Latin Glosses in Medieval Hebrew Translations of Philosophical Texts and Their Relation to Hebrew Philosophical Dictionaries," in *Lexiques bilingues dans les domaines philosophique et scientifique (Moyen-Âge et Renaissance)*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse and Danielle Jacquart (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 31–48.

I ask God, who is God of truth, to direct me on the path of truth for the sake of His benevolence. Amen.

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]⁹⁰

[1]⁹¹ Our Teacher [Maimonides] says in the Introduction to the book *The Guide of the Perplexed*: *You should not think that these great secrets are fully and exhaustively known by anyone among us. It is not so; rather sometimes truth appears to us that we think it is as day, and then matter⁹² and habits conceal it so that we find ourselves again in a dark night, almost as we were at first. We are like someone over whom lightning appears only once in a deep and dark night. Among us there is one for whom the lightning flashes time and time again,⁹³ so that he is always, as it were, in constant light. Thus night is to him as day. That is the degree of the great one among the prophets, to whom it was said: **But as for thee, stand thou here by Me** [Deut 5:28], and of whom it was said: **that the skin of his face sent forth beams** [Exod 34:29].⁹⁴ Among them there is one to whom the lightning flashes only once in the whole of his night; that is the rank of those of whom it is said: **they prophesied, but they did so no more** [Num 11:25]. There are others between whose lightning flashes there are longer or shorter intervals. Thereafter comes he who does not attain a degree of light even of any lightning flash. He is illumined, rather, by a polished and glowing object, stones or something similar that give light in the darkness of the night.*

[2]⁹⁵ I say that [Maimonides] divides prophetic apprehension into three categories. He says there is another degree of apprehension: that of perfect individuals who are not

⁹⁰ *Moreh ha-moreh* 121–123.

⁹¹ *Moreh ha-moreh* 121, line 1–13. The paragraph is Ibn Falaquera's own Hebrew translation of the *Guide*. Throughout the *Moreh ha-moreh* he translates passages of the *Guide* directly from Arabic. In the English translation that follows, words in italics are identical in both ibn Falaquera and Ibn Tibbon; those in normal type are ibn Falaquera's additions and/or modifications. Ibn Falaquera's translation is at times closer to al-Ḥarizi's version (cf. for example Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 63 n12, 121 n3–13). On these three translations, see Yair Shiffman, "The Differences Between the Translations of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* by Falaquera, Ibn Tibbon and Al-Ḥarizi, and Their Textual and Philosophical Implications," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 44:1 (1999), 47–61.

⁹² Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi have "nature" (respectively, *ha-tivi'im/teva'*) rather than "matter" (ibn Falaquera: *homerim*). Cf. Munk 10 n4.

⁹³ Ibn Tibbon adds here: "with little interval in between" (*bi-me'at hefresh beineihem*). It is not found in the Judeo-Arabic text, nor in al-Ḥarizi or Ibn Falaquera's translations. Cf. Munk 11 n1.

⁹⁴ Ibn Tibbon adds here: "There is one for whom there are great intervals from one lightning flash to the next—this is the rank of most prophets" ('Even-Shemu'el 6, line 20–21). The phrase is found neither in the Judeo-Arabic text, in al-Ḥarizi, and ibn Falaquera's Hebrew translations, nor in Pines' English translation. Cf. Munk, 11 n2.

⁹⁵ Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 121, line 14–20.

prophets. Their apprehension of deep matters is limited.⁹⁶ They can be likened to a burnished and pure object such as a pearl, which casts light into the depth of night.⁹⁷ This *marshal* is quite fitting, for all those who apprehend while still living in this world are in the dark, on account of matter and custom;⁹⁸ but the divine overflow, which is the clear light that emanates to the prophets, is like lightning that illuminates the darkness of night, and the distinction between the light of lightning and the light [reflected] from a pearl is evident.⁹⁹

[3]¹⁰⁰ [Maimonides] concludes the matter by saying: *and even this faint light that appears over us is not constant but is visible and concealed as if it were the flaming sword which turned every way* [Gen 3:24]. *It is in accord with these states that the degrees of the perfect vary. As for those who never see the light but thrash around in the night, of them it is said: they know not, neither do they understand; they go about in darkness* [Ps 82:5].¹⁰¹ *The truth, in spite of the strength of its manifestation, is entirely hidden from them, as is said of them: And now men see not the*

⁹⁶ There seems to be something of an ambiguity here. Ibn Falaquera may be saying that the apprehension of any non-prophet is always limited; or he may be saying that Maimonides creates a category of non-prophets who have limited apprehension (e.g. an individual who is morally though not intellectually perfect). In either case, there are at least two competing medieval philosophical views on the distinction between prophetic and non-prophetic knowledge (that is, philosophic or scientific). One holds that the difference between how a prophet and a non-prophet acquire knowledge lies in their methods (analytical in the case of the philosopher, imaginative or intuitive in the case of the prophet), but not in content—the philosopher is able to achieve the same knowledge as the prophet, though only with great difficulty. Another view holds that the content of prophetic knowledge is a priori inaccessible to a non-prophet. Al-Kindi is an exponent of the first view; cf. Peter Adamson, “Al-Kindi and the Reception of Greek Philosophy,” in Adamson and Taylor eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46–47. Ibn Falaquera’s Scholar expresses the second view in *Epistle* *ibid.*, 35–36, and n60. Maimonides mentions yet a third view, namely, that there is something biological about prophecy as requiring a “perfection for the imaginative faculty” (II:36, Pines 369). However, as he says elsewhere, the divine will may prevent even such a perfect individual from becoming a prophet (cf. II:32, Pines 361–362).

⁹⁷ Cf. Pines 7.

⁹⁸ Maimonides describes how matter hinders one from apprehending the nature of the deity in III:9 (Pines 436–437).

⁹⁹ On the concept of “overflow,” see II:12 (Pines 279–280), and II:36–37 (Pines 369–375). There are, therefore, two categories of apprehension: those who receive the light of lightning, or directly, which corresponds to the prophets; and those who receive the light reflected from a pearl, or indirectly, which corresponds to perfect individuals who are not prophets.

¹⁰⁰ *Moreh ha-moreh* 121 line 21–122 line 28.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Moreh ha-moreh* III:51 (Shiffman 318–319): “Consider the dictum of the Sages that [the patriarch] Jacob is the sun. Maimonides hints at this notion in the Introduction to the [Guide] by saying “as for those who never once see a light but grope about in their night... they are the vulgar among the people” (Pines 7). For the analogy of intellectual apprehension to light from without, see also ibn Bajja, *Letter of Farewell*, trans. Miguel Asin Palacios, “La ‘Carta de Adiós’ de Avempace,” *Al-Andalus* 8:1 (1943) ¶25 (79).

light which is bright in the skies [Job 37.21]. *They are the vulgar among the people. There is in this no occasion for them in this Treatise.* Consider what I write in III:51 and you will then realize what “light” our Teacher [Maimonides] hints at.¹⁰² Ibn Sina says that this notion is not given to conceptualization, but is rather [like] a blink of an eye.¹⁰³

[4]¹⁰⁴ One of the commentators has said those who cleave to God¹⁰⁵ can see some of those things that appear to prophets, and what appears to them is perhaps like a strike of lightning that overpowers the sense of sight, and which disappears, reappears and possibly then remains [visible].¹⁰⁶ Or it might overpower [the sense of sight] and appear for long or short periods, or it appears concerning a subject or several distinct matters. It seems to me that these expressions hint at all this: “looking at them is ‘as the appearance of a flash of lightning’ [...] and his word is in them as though **they ran and returned** [Ezek 1:14].”¹⁰⁷ Let me now return to [Maimonides’] text.

102 In his commentary on III:51, Ibn Falaquera quotes from Ibn Bajja, *Letter on Conjunction of the Intellect with Man* (*Moreh ha-moreh* 318, line 14–32). The quotation is faithful to ibn Bajja’s text, but Ibn Falaquera omits the sentence where ibn Bajja directly states that the Active Intellect is like light. Readers of the *Moreh ha-moreh* who knew the original passage in Ibn Bajja would realize ibn Falaquera’s hidden view, which is that ibn Falaquera interprets Maimonides’ “light” to correspond to the Active Intellect. In other words, ibn Falaquera edited the quotation for esoteric purposes, to hide this interpretation from unprepared readers (who may not have known ibn Bajja). For the passage in ibn Bajja, see Joaquín Fuentes Lomba, “Avempace: Tratado de la unión del intelecto con el hombre,” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 11 (2000), 384–385. Ibn Falaquera omits the passage “reflexiona ahora... es lo que más se parece a la luz” (385).

103 This observation recalls Ibn Sina’s notion of “intuitive prophecy,” which includes “the ability to arrive at a conclusion or truth with no external aid and without prior learning,” and the “ability to arrive at a conclusion [of a syllogism] instantaneously.” Amira Eran, “Intuition and Inspiration—the Causes of Jewish Thinkers’ Objection to Avicenna’s Intellectual Prophecy (*Ḥads*),” *JSQ* 14 (2007), 39–40.

104 *Moreh ha-moreh* 122, line 29–34.

105 “Cleaving to God” (*devequt*) is a biblical term and central concept in Abraham ibn Ezra and Bahya ibn Paquda, where it takes the connotation of union with God. See Abraham ibn Ezra, *The Secret of the Torah: A Translation of Abraham ibn Ezra’s “Sefer Yesod Mora Ve-Sod Ha-Torah,”* trans. H. Norman Strickman (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995), 107; Aaron Hughes, “Two Approaches to the Love of God in Medieval Jewish Thought: The Concept of ‘Devequt’ in the Works of ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi,” *Studies in Religion* 28:2 (1999), 139–151.

106 The distinction, then, between lightning that appears to prophets and to non-prophets seems to be that which appears to non-prophets is too strong for the individual who receives it, and occurs arbitrarily. Cf. also II:45 (Pines 395–396).

107 A quotation from *Sefer Yeşirah*, ¶8, see A. Peter Hayman, *Sefer Yeşirah* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). See also III:2: the motion of the “living creatures” (*ḥayiot*) “consisted in running and retracing their way ... accordingly he [Ezekiel] says that it is like lightning, whose motion appears to be the swiftest of motions and which stretches out rapidly and at a rush from a certain place and then with

[5]¹⁰⁸ He said: *Know that whenever one of the perfect wishes to mention either orally or in writing, something he understands of these secrets, according to the level of his perfection, he is unable to explain with complete clarity and coherence even the portion that he has apprehended, as he could do with the other sciences whose teaching is generally recognized.* Instead, it will occur to him,¹⁰⁹ *when teaching another, that which had occurred when teaching his own soul. I mean to say that the notion will appear, come out, and then be concealed again as though* with respect to this matter, much of it is not different from a little. Only the sage who has apprehended this deep matter knows its true meaning, but he is unable to explain it to someone else. By virtue of habit in studying the sciences and great diligence in investigating them, the faculty of understanding and apprehension assists one with respect to deep subjects, but he will not be able to explain to another individual that which he has learned. That other individual will likewise not be able to understand the former, even if he is taught with every kind of explanation, unless they both have the same degree of [knowledge of] science. It seems to me that this subject is like trying to teach someone who was born blind [how] to distinguish among colors.¹¹⁰ Just as [the blind person] lacks the faculty of sight to distinguish among colors, so does that other individual lack the faculty of understanding to apprehend such matters.¹¹¹

[6]¹¹² For this reason, he who habituates his soul in [learning] the sciences will acquire, by means of judgment and inquiry, many concepts that he will not be able to explain by demonstration, and which he will not be able to share with someone else by teaching, but rather he only indicates [to another] the method that he himself undertook. If [the student] attempts to employ the same method, he might possibly acquire the same concept, if he is perfect in judgment and of as collected and clear

the same rapidity contracts and returns time after time to the place whence it moved" (Pines 419). Maimonides' statement clarifies the meaning of this paragraph, which is that the intellectual overflow is not constant, but rather frequently interrupted.

108 *Moreh ha-moreh* 122, line 35–46.

109 The ibn Tibbon translation has "he will apprehend"; the Pines translation reflects the Judeo-Arabic text and accords with Falaquera's version.

110 Cf. *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, Preface, where Ibn Tufayl writes that the blind can never come to know colors except through "descriptive explanations and ostensive definitions." Thus those "who merely think and have not reached the level of love are like the blind. The colors, at that stage, are known only by accounts of their names... but to those who reach love, God grants what I purely metaphorically call another faculty. This corresponds to the restoration of sight." *Ibn Tufayl's 'Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān': a Philosophical Tale*, trans. Lenn E. Goodman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 97.

111 Ibn Falaquera describes the faculty of apprehension as analogous to sense perception, an analogy that also appears in Ibn Sina. See Dag Nikolaus Hasse, "Avicenna on Abstraction," in *Aspects of Avicenna*, ed. Robert Wisnovsky (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 46.

112 *Moreh ha-moreh* 122, line 46–123, line 52.

intellect as [the teacher].¹¹³ If he is not like the teacher in intellect, judgment, and habit, [the student] will not be able to acquire what the teacher acquired; he will deem as false that which [the teacher] says to him and reject it. The knowledgeable sage is obliged to distance himself from such a [student] and not reveal him *the secrets* that he knows, for that is for the benefit [of the student]; and the hearts of the sages are the graves of secrets. Let me now return to [Maimonides'] text.

[7]¹¹⁴ [Maimonides] said: *the causes that account for the contradictory and contrary statements found in books are seven*, and he explains them. It seems to me that he gives a hint in what he says about the *fifth cause*, concerning the explanation of terms that he clarifies in the beginning of the book, since their analysis [at the beginning] is unpolished compared to what he explains later.¹¹⁵ This is what is called a “preface” [*petiḥah*]: a sage writes things in the beginning of his book in order to facilitate their comprehension and he subsequently analyzes them. It is called in Arabic “muṣādara.”¹¹⁶

[8]¹¹⁷ He said that *divergences found in this Treatise* are due to the *fifth cause and the seventh cause*. He said: *know this, search its true meaning, and reflect on it very well so as not to become confused by some of its chapters*. It was necessary to issue such a warning because he [Maimonides] knew that many of those who study his book, but who did not grasp his ideas to the fullest extent, would be quick to condemn it.¹¹⁸ An example of this are the following chapters: I:9, 11, 13, 14, 54, 67, 71; and II:13–14, 19,

113 On the ethical virtues required for the study of philosophy, and the necessity of acquiring a suitable study partner, see David, *Shemtob ben Joseph ibn Falaquera*, 10–20, esp. 17.

114 *Moreh ha-moreh* 123, line 53–57.

115 The “fifth cause” of contradictions arises from pedagogical constraints (Pines 18). By “terms” ibn Falaquera may have in mind the categories of “equivocal,” “derivative,” and “amphibolous” terms mentioned at the beginning of the Introduction to the *Guide* (Pines 5).

116 In Judeo-Arabic in the text: מִצְאָדָרָה.

117 *Moreh ha-moreh* 123, line 58–63.

118 A likely reference to controversies that raged in the 13th century over the *Guide*. Ibn Falaquera was too young to have taken an active part in the controversies of the 1230s surrounding the *Guide*. It may be, therefore, that controversies around the *Guide* did not completely fizzle out after the 1230s, but dragged on into the late 13th century. Evidence for this notion can be found in the *Letter Regarding the Guide*, where ibn Falaquera writes that rabbis from France arose against the *Guide* and their opposition reached Damascus, Palestine and Akko, “where all those who speak out misunderstand Maimonides and his books, and they wrote letters to Barcelona, whence the letters reached us” (Lemler, 40). Thus even at this late date (1290) they continued on in the East and in Spain. See *Epistle*, 75–76, and David Lemler, “Shem Tov ibn Falaquera’s *Letter Regarding the Guide* – Critical Edition,” *Zutot* 9 (2012), 27–50.

etc.¹¹⁹ Even more so, some sages have already composed books that negate the opinions of philosophers. They did so in order that the multitude would not think that they believe in the opinions of the philosophers.¹²⁰

119 It is unclear why ibn Falaquera writes that the chapters in part I have attracted condemnation. Of these chapters, the *Moreh ha-moreh* covers only I:9 and I:71 (128–131, 173–175). There is no indication there that these two chapters are especially problematic. II:13–14, 19 deal with Creation (*Moreh ha-moreh* 256–264, 266–271).

120 One such attack on philosophy, which ibn Falaquera may have plausibly known, is Jacob bar Sheshet's *Meshiv devarim nekhohim*, a critique of *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim* by Samuel ibn Tibbon and in defense of kabbalah. Yet other rabbinical authorities such as Menachem Ha-Me'iri defended the study of philosophy and of Maimonides' writings. See Georges Vajda ed., *Sefer meshiv devarim nekhohim* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1969) [Hebrew]; Moshe Halbertal, *Between Torah and Wisdom: Rabbi Menachem Ha-Me'iri and the Maimonidean Halakhists in Provence* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001) [Hebrew]; Gregg Stern, *Philosophy and Rabbinic Culture: Jewish Interpretation and Controversy in Medieval Languedoc* (New York: Routledge, 2009). Ibn Falaquera's final suggestion here is not that rabbis who criticize philosophy had an objection to philosophy per se, but merely that they did not wish to give the masses the impression that they believed in it.